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26 January 1955

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Assistant Directors, DD/I  
 Chief of Operations, DD/P  
 Chiefs, Senior Staffs, DD/P  
 Chief, DD/P Admin  
 Chiefs, Area Divisions, DD/P  
 Chiefs, Administrative Offices, DD/A  
 AD/Personnel  
 AD/Communications  
 All Training and Training Liaison Officers

**SUBJECT:** Standards for Intensive Language Training

**1. THE PROBLEM:**

- a. Recent examinations of the Office of Training by the Inspector General, the Special Study Group and the Clark Committee have focused attention upon the Agency's increasing need for qualified linguists.
- b. The importance of care in selection of persons for intensive language training is revealed, in part, by the heavy expenditure of government time and money involved in satisfying Agency requirements for qualified linguists. On the average, it takes the equivalent of from one to four years of full-time training at a cost to the Agency of \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year, per man, to produce a qualified linguist in a given language.
- c. In addition to the cost factor, the need for careful selection of only fully qualified candidates arises out of the limited availability of persons who may be spared for intensive language training, in relation to the Agency's need to develop far greater numbers of highly qualified linguists. Hence, selection of candidates should be based upon the applications of high standards of selection.
- d. This paper endeavors to identify selection standards and to indicate the assistance that the Office of Training is willing to provide to all components of the Agency in applying the standards to the selection of individuals for intensive language training.

**2. QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS:**

- a. High aptitude for learning in general, and for performing with distinction on a given job do not, of themselves, indicate that the individual possessing these qualities has an inherent aptitude for language learning.

JOB NO. BOX NO. FLD NO. DOC. NO. 5 NO CHANGE  
 IN CLASS/ DECLASS/ CLASS CHANGED TO: TS S C RET. JUST 22  
 NEXT REV DATE 9 REV DATE 28/12/78 REVIEWER 615 TYPE DOC. 02  
 NO. PGS 3 CREATION DATE 08/01/55 ORG CLASS S  
 REV CLASS C REV COORD. AUTH: HN 793

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- b. Inherent aptitude for language learning, in and of itself, can not be the sole criterion for selection of individuals for such training since other considerations may restrict fulfillment of their capabilities. For example, performance is limited by the degree of motivation to learn the language; the individual's family situation may limit the time he can devote to study and to development of his language skills; where language study overseas is involved, a wife, fearful of the local population or actively disinterested in the area and the people, restricts the mobility of her husband in mingling freely with the local population and limits the benefits to be derived from his study abroad.
- c. Consideration of the foregoing factors, in each individual case, is necessary to ensure that the Agency will in fact realize a satisfactory return on its investment in the individual selected for intensive language training. On the other hand, the fact that an individual does not possess the requisite qualifications for intensive language training does not mean that he should be given no language training at all. It means only that he should not be given an assignment requiring advanced proficiency. Such individuals may benefit by limited training in language. In fact, all persons scheduled for overseas assignments should have, as a prerequisite to overseas movement, a facility to express themselves in the language adequately in simple social-travel situations.

3. SELECTION STANDARDS FOR INTENSIVE LANGUAGE TRAINING:

- a. Essential qualifications for effective intensive study of language include: above-average aptitude for language learning, high motivation and interest, a family situation conducive to long hours of study, and to ready adjustment of both husband and wife to the area and local population. In the latter respect, the situation is most desirable when a wife's interests lead her also to a study of the language and area.
- b. The foregoing qualifications should be considered in the light of considerations set forth in paragraph 2 above. Only candidates who possess these essential qualifications and are otherwise qualified for external training under Agency Regulation [REDACTED] should be nominated to receive intensive language training.

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4. PROCEDURES:

The Office of Training proposes to approve only those candidates for intensive language training who possess the essential qualifications described above. It is suggested, therefore, that requesting officials ascertain the eligibility of candidates before nomination.

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In order to determine eligibility prior to nomination, qualifications of all potential candidates may be referred to the Office of Training Qualifications Review Panel for assessment prior to formalizing the training request. Experience has demonstrated that this Panel can provide valuable guidance to sponsoring officials desiring an estimate of probabilities for successful study. Every candidate for intensive external training is considered by the Panel either before or after formalization of a request. The Panel meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. [REDACTED] Chief, Language and External Training School, Extension 8015, should be consulted in connection with all Panel actions.

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MATTHEW BAIRD  
Director of Training

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